reports (*cf.* Ibis, 1894, p. 164). Notes are given on 66 species, and on the exact dates and places of their occurrences. Further notes are added in conclusion: amongst which are remarks upon the remains of Pelicans in the Kitchen-middens, and on the supposed recent occurrence of this bird in Denmark (*cf.* Ibis, 1894, p. 348, and 1895, p. 294); also on birds lately received from the Faroes and from Greenland.

XLI.—*Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.*

We have received the following letters, addressed "to the Editors":—

Sirs,—Last year the Palestine Redstart (*Ruticilla semirufa*) was, as usual, abundant around our mountain-camp in the Lebanon. The males sang freely, and I was impressed afresh with the curious rustling sound they make at the end of the song proper, just as if the birds were scraping backwards and forwards with their bills among dry leaves. I have a strong impression of having read somewhere that the Common Redstart (*R. phœnicura*) utters a similar sound in connection with its song; but none of the books to which I have access at present make any mention of it, and *R. phœnicura* does not sing during its visits to us. No doubt some of your readers can tell me what the facts are in reference to the latter species.

If this sound—apparently useless—be common to both species, that would argue either some unknown and somewhat important function, or else it would show how tenaciously a character may be perpetuated by heredity in the absence of selection. Could such an unmusical finale to an otherwise melodious performance have a function analogous to what Dr. Wallace calls "recognition marks"? I mean, as evidence to the female that her suitor was, so to speak, of her own station in life. It is not often that I see *R. semirufa* and *R. phœnicura* in the same place and side by side; but their

areas do overlap to some extent in the Lebanon, though I cannot say whether that is ever the case in the breeding-season.

Yours &c.,

W. T. Van Dyck, M.D.

Beyrout, Syria,
January 20, 1895.

Sirs,—Lieutenant W. Robinson, author of that recent book 'A Flying Trip to the Tropics,' intends to leave New York on June 13th by one of the "Red D" line of steamers for Curaçao and La Guayra, *en route* to the island of Margarita, lying off the coast of Venezuela.

Mr. Robinson had his attention called to this island, the fauna of which seems to be imperfectly known, by the notices which appeared in the January number of 'The Ibis' (pp. 144–172).

Mr. Robinson is an enthusiastic ornithologist, as attested to by his observations and descriptions of the birds of Colombia, recorded in the book above noted; and, since he goes mainly in search of birds, we may reasonably look forward to gratifying results from his visit.

Yours &c.,

Shelley W. Denton,
Curator, Brewster Museum,
Cambridge, Mass.

Wellesley, Mass., U. S. A.,
June 7, 1895.

Sirs,—I was unable to be present at the 25th Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club on April 17th, but I read in the 'Bulletin' that it is likely that a new edition of Capt. Shelley's 'Birds of Egypt' will be brought out. If so, will you let me mention that, with regard to Bonelli's Eagle, Capt. Shelley says, "I have never met with it during my several visits to those countries (Egypt and Lower Nubia), nor have I seen an Egyptian specimen in any collection." I shot a bird of this species myself on Feb. 6, 1872, near Dendera, when flying over the dahabeyah, and it is now stuffed in my

collection; and Mr. J. H. Gurney, Jun., in his 'Rambles of a Naturalist' (six months' bird-collecting in Egypt), p. 131, says:—"A fine female was shot on the 22nd of April at Beltisnah. It had been chasing Pigeons, and was resting on a sand-bank. It was the only specimen which we met with in our travels. Canon Tristram has a specimen which was killed somewhere above Cairo by Sir W. Medlycott."

Yours &c.,

THOMAS PARKIN.

Fairseat, High Wickham, Hastings,
Aug. 2, 1895.

SIRS,—I regret exceedingly to find that, by some strange mischance, two or three mistakes have found their way into the paper on the pterylography of the Tinamous which was published in 'The Ibis' for January last.

These mistakes were made in connection with the cervical moieties of the spinal and ventral tracts, and to avoid complication I will redescribe them in the terms in vogue at the time the paper was written, instead of adopting those suggested by me in my latest paper "On the Pterylography of the Hoatzin," published in the July number of this volume.

The sum of my transgressions is this: that I described under the heading "Pteryla colli lateralis" (p. 2) what is really neither more nor less than the cervical moiety of the Pteryla ventralis. The simplest way of setting this right will be to rewrite, as I have just said, the description of both spinal and ventral tracts.

Pt. spinalis.—Arising at the nape of the neck, it divides soon afterwards into two branches. Coalescing between the humeral tracts, they soon after again divide, and at the same time increase greatly in width. Just in front of the thigh a branch is sent down to the femoral tract, the main stems of the tract retain their independence for a short distance further, and then fuse at a point roughly corresponding with a line drawn across the back from the acetabulum. The remainder of the tract is now continued backwards, finally to blend with the pteryla caudæ.

Pt. ventralis (Pl. I., *Pt. coll. lat., Pt.v.*).—The anterior end of this tract along its dorsal border has fused with the Pteryla spinalis (Pl. I., *Pt. coll. lat.*). About halfway down the neck it divides into two, and exchanges its ventral for a lateral course. At the shoulder a branch is sent upwards and backwards to join the humeral tract: the main trunk—the pt. ventralis of the original paper—on the breast, again divides into a strong, narrow, outer, and a broad, but weaker, inner branch, the two being separated by a narrow apterion. The outer branch passes into the pteryla femoralis, sending at the same time sharply forward a narrow double row of feathers to join the hypopteron. The inner tract is probably continued down to the anus, but, the bird having been eviscerated, this region is too much disturbed to afford trustworthy data.

Apt. trunci laterale.—Arising from the side of the neck, rather more than halfway down, it passess backwards, dividing the humeral from the spinal tract; it then expands into a large space embracing the whole side of the trunk, but divided more or less completely into two portions. The first of these two extends from the summit of the shoulder backwards to the anterior margin of the femoral tract. The second arises between the two branches of the pteryla ventralis; running backwards between the leg and trunk, it sweeps round the femoral tract, and serves to divide it from the pt. spinalis. The first of these two spaces, as will be seen in Pl. I., is more or less completely subdivided by a double row of feathers from the outer branch of the pt. ventralis to the hypopteron.

The following corrections are therefore necessary:—For the description of the pt. spinalis (p. 2), and pt. ventralis (p. 3), and apt. trunci laterale (p. 6), see above.

Erase the term *pt. colli lateralis* and the text appertaining thereto on p. 2, and for *apt. colli lateralis* (p. 9) read *apt. trunci laterale.*

Pl. I., for *Pt.coll.lat.* read *Pt.v.*

Pl. I., for *Apt.c.lat.* read *Apt.t.lat.*

Pl. II., for *Apt.c.lat.* read *Apt.t.lat.*

Such amends as lay in my power I trust I have made, and hope that by the publication of this correction in the present volume I shall save my readers much trouble and annoyance, and myself many well-merited anathemas.

Yours &c.,

W. P. Pycraft.

University Museum, Oxford,
August 1, 1895.

M. Boucard's Collection of Birds.—M. Adolphe Boucard, well known to ornithologists for the excellent collections which he formerly made in Mexico (1858–59), has presented the whole of his private collection of birds to the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle, of Paris. This will be a most valuable addition to the great French National Collection, as it embraces nearly 25,000 specimens and a great many types, such as that of *Chiromachæris coronata*. The usual practice at Paris until lately has been to mount all specimens for the Galerie; but the Boucard Collection will be kept unmounted, and form an excellent basis for a skin-collection. M. Oustalet is now engaged in arranging it.

The Manchester Museum, Owens College.—The Report of the Manchester Museum (1895) informs us that a "beginning has been made with the arrangement and labelling of the collection of birds. The number of stuffed skins in the collection is very large, much larger than can be accommodated in the present cases; but many of the specimens are in a very unsatisfactory condition, and of some, even of the commoner forms, there are no examples which are in a fit state for exhibition. Arrangements have been made with Mr. Ogilvie Grant, of the British Museum, to name the greater part of the collection, and many hundred specimens have now passed through his hands. These are now being arranged in systematic order and provided with labels for the individual species, and also with descriptive labels for the families. The Museum is indebted to Miss L. B. Samuels for much voluntary assistance in cataloguing and arranging this collection."

The Australian Museum, Sydney.—From the Report of the Trustees of this Museum for 1894 we learn that Dr. E. P. Ramsay, after twenty years' service, has resigned the Curatorship owing to ill-health, and has been succeeded by Mr. Robert Etheridge, Jr., formerly of the British Museum. The operations of the Museum have been much hampered during the past year by the diminution of the Parliamentary grant, and very few additions have been made. The only publication issued since the last Report has been pt. iv. of the Catalogue of the Birds—Picariæ, subord. Halcyones, by Dr. E. P. Ramsay.

Birds in Arabia Felix.—In Dhofar, on the southern coast of Arabia, Mr. Theodore Bent (Geogr. Journ. vi. p. 121) appears to have hit upon a district that may well deserve the name of Arabia Felix. On entering the mountains by the Wadi Ghersid the explorers found themselves in a "valley covered with the richest tropical vegetation." A "small and exquisitely beautiful lake" was "well stocked with ducks and other water-birds," and the fig-trees were "full of birds." In another valley, behind Taka (the Abyssapolis of Ptolemy), is a lake full of bulrushes, with "quantities of birds" on it—"Ducks, Herons, and Waterhens," while the "banks are adorned with very fine timber." Here is a fine opening for an ornithological tour. Could not our friend Col. Yerbury, who has so ably explored Aden, extend his researches to Dhofar? Not a single specimen has yet been obtained in this district.

The Summit of Roraima and its Birds.—The last number of 'Timehri' contains the following account by Mr. Quelch of his recent ascent of Roraima:—"Since the discovery of a path to the summit of this famous mountain, and its first ascent in 1884 by Messrs. im Thurn and Perkins, several orchid-collectors have made the ascent; but little, however, has been contributed by them to our knowledge of its topography. Taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by our expedition to the great Savannah, Mr. F. V. McConnell and I, accompanied by Mr. C. A. Lloyd, determined to make

a more detailed examination of the summit than had hitherto been attempted. Leaving the Makusi village of Kwaimatta with 39 Makusi and Arrekuna bearers, and with two taxidermists, in the middle of October, we reached the Arrekuna village of Kamaivawong, at the base of the mountain, on November 3rd, after a most arduous walk of 17 days across the intervening mountains, portages of the Ireng and Kotinga Rivers having been made at Karona Falls and Sokoking respectively.

"Three days were spent in reconnoitring the path and in building a half-way house at a height of 6400 ft., and on the 7th the ascent was made to the summit along the path discovered by Mr. im Thurn, which we found to present no difficulty whatever as regards climbing, though the walking was intensely arduous and tiring.

"The general aspect of the plateau on the summit fully bears out the description of it given by Mr. im Thurn, though our more extended examination during the two nights and three days spent there enables us to add to it considerably.

"The summit should be described as presenting, not the aspect of a hollow basin, but of a plateau which has been worked down by aërial denudation into an altogether irregular and broken series of deep valleys and precipitous ridges, the total differences between the lowest and highest points being more than 400 ft. The ridges are frequently broken into isolated peaks, the highest being 8740 ft. above the sea-level, presenting the aspect of piles and terraces of irregular boulders and masses.

"The valleys wind about in almost an endless maze, with lake-like shallow pools, more or less obscured by an abundant dwarf vegetation. After the slightest rains the surplus water is carried off along these valleys as an overflow to the ravines on the edge, descending to the slopes below as waterfalls to swell the various surrounding streams. Many small trees are spread over the valleys and climb up in a densely-packed bushy jungle along the western slopes of the higher ridges, the common species of *Bonnetia* (*B. roraimæ*) being at once the most abundant and the largest,

reaching to a height of more than 30 feet. Three species of birds, a mammal, a toad, an earthworm, a wood-louse, two spiders, two myriapods, a dragon-fly, a butterfly, and a few other small insects—chiefly beetles—are to be found on the summit, and doubtless more complete examination will greatly extend the list. The sandstone and conglomerate which form the entire mass of the summit are worked into almost every conceivable grotesque shape, and are more or less darkened by weather and saturation with water, fine layers of sandy shale here and there projecting from the mass. Clouds and mists of various degrees of density constantly lie on or pass across some portion of the plateau and make it a difficult matter to secure good photographs. The cold winds and low temperature (47° F.) make it necessary to secure good shelter for the night; while the rugged character of the plateau entails a considerable amount of time for its exploration.

"Descending on the evening of the 9th, at the urgent entreaty of our Indians, to the village at the base of the slope, we had to make arrangements for leaving on the 12th, and after a journey of 11 days, *viâ* the portage of Kalisha-sararu, on the Kotinga, and Karona Falls, on the Irena, we arrived at Kwaimatta on the 23rd November, after an absence of 36 days."

The bird-skins obtained on Roraima on this occasion have been brought to London by Mr. McConnell and examined at the British Museum. As Mr. McConnell kindly informs us, they have been referred to the following species :—*Cyclorhis guianensis*, *Diglossa major*, and *Zonotrichia pileata*—all well-known Guianan species. Besides these Mr. Quelch tells us (*in litt.*) that a fine Humming-bird was seen, but not obtained.

Nesting of Geocichla nævia *in British Columbia.*—Mr. W. E. Brooks sends us the following extract from a letter received on the 18th of June from his son in British Columbia:—

"The trip we have just returned from was up to and beyond Summit or Chilliweyuk Lake, at the source of the Veddar River. Our party consisted of a Kansas man called Williams,

who was our guide, three others, and myself. Summit Lake was reached on the fourth day, a fine sheet of water about 7 miles long by 1½ broad, rugged rocks running up on all sides. The water-level of the lake is about 2500 feet, and the mountains rise 5000 to 7000 feet above that. I went principally to get Rocky-Mountain Goats. We got into the goat-country all right enough, but, not knowing their habits at this season, we looked for them right up on top of the mountains among the snow, when they were down in the valleys. Then bad weather with snow came on, our provisions ran out, and we had to scurry home without getting anything. Canada Geese, Arctic Blue-birds, Goosanders, Pipits, and Audubon's Thrushes breed up there, but the mountains were buried in snow, and it snowed hard during part of our stay, so we did not get any of their eggs. Several pairs of Bald Eagles had nests around the lake, but no other Raptors were seen. A large flock of Velvet Scoters was on the lake: could they breed there? Mallards were breeding; no other Ducks or Loons. Blue Grouse common at timber-line on mountains: I shot nine in a few hours. I also took the nest, with two eggs, of *Geocichla nævia*. I think that only one nest of this Thrush has been found before—in Alaska. The eggs are large and handsome, like those of *Turdus musicus*, but the spots are light brown instead of black. These were about the only noteworthy facts, although we must have travelled over 80 miles."

The Parliamentary Report on the British Museum for the present year mentions the following important acquisitions in the Class of Birds during the year 1894:—1482 birds, representing about 50 species, chiefly of the family Tanagridæ, from various part of America; presented by F. D. Godman, Esq., F.R.S., and Osbert Salvin, Esq., F.R.S. 183 birds from Nyasaland, presented by H. H. Johnston, Esq., C.B., amongst which are the types of a new Parrakeet (*Agapornis liliænæ*). 86 specimens from the Shan States, including the types of a small Flower-pecker (*Ixulus clarkii*) and of a Scimitar Babbler (*Pomatorhinus imberbis*), new to

the collection; presented by E. W. Oates, Esq. 55 skins and 61 eggs, including two species new to the collection (*Anthus infuscatus* and *Lanius fuscatus*), from Foochow; presented by C. B. Rickett, Esq. 115 birds from Luzon, Philippine Islands, including the types of 15 new species and three others new to the collection, presented by the subscribers to the Whitehead Expedition Fund. 65 specimens from Bongao and Sibutu Islands, Sulu Archipelago, including nine species new to the collection and the types of four species (*Scops sibutuensis, Prioniturus verticalis, Dicæum sibutuense,* and *Edoliisoma everetti*), collected by A. H. Everett, Esq.; purchased. 173 specimens collected in Borneo by Mr. A. H. Everett; received in exchange. 171 specimens from Palawan, Borneo, &c.; presented by A. H. Everett, Esq. Five birds from Mount Dulit, N. Borneo, including the type of a new Falcon (*Falco ernesti*), collected by C. E. Hose, Esq.; purchased. A rare Owl (*Gymnoscops insularis*) from the Seychelles, new to the collection; presented by Chevalier Brooks. The type specimen of *Pœoptera kenricki*, from Northern Masai-land, new to the collection; presented by Major R. W. E. Kenrick. A pair of flightless Ducks (*Nesonetta aucklandica*) from Auckland Island, a pair of Mantell's Apteryx (*Apteryx mantelli*) from North Island, New Zealand, and a pair of a new Bird of Paradise (*Trichoparadisea gulielmi*) from Finisterre Mountains, New Guinea, new to the collection; presented by the Hon. Walter Rothschild. 60 bones of birds, mostly belonging to extinct species, from Chatham Island and New Zealand, including the types of seven new species, collected by Mr. H. O. Forbes; purchased.

The total number of additions to the Class of Birds in 1894 was 6423.

We have heard, with great regret, of the death of Henry Thornton Wharton, M.A., M.B.O.U., of whom an obituary notice will be given in our next number.